

755 certain Christian words which the buda fears. Some also slaughter a sheep or fowl, eat it roasted, then burn the bones so as not to attract the buda again.

Sometimes a reluctant buda is transferred bodily to a spot on a trail outside the hamlet. There a root of a bush is twisted - the signature of the buda and expression of his greedy intent. Whoever passes unprotected is pounced on by the hungry buda.

755
789 Written amulets (ketab") are hung on the neckcord or around the waist to assure successful prognosis. The writing and sale of these amulets is one of the most common extracurricular activities of the dabtara scribe and often his most lucrative income-producing work. Hence the dabtara is feared, for he can use his power for good or ill. The amulets contain such formulae as "besem Aw, Wold, M'ānfās Qeddus" (In the name of the Father, Son, Holy Ghost); mystic names of archangels; formulae in Amharic, Gees, even Arabic of sorts. Church scholars with the title "māmhēr" (professor) are believed to be able to write even more powerful amulets, for it is believed that God gave 1000 special "medicines" to Jesus on Christmas (a sort of birthday gift) and that Jesus and the angels taught these "medicines" to the māmhēr. Another advantage of their amulets is that the māmhēr are never suspected of using their power for ill. In either case, the name of the person to be protected is written in the amulet; so that it cannot be transferred or sold without erasure and the new name.

159
754 As noted, women in the age group 15 to 30 are the most often struck. The following case was observed by the author in the town of Gondar. The patient was a 27 year old married woman, Zawdita Bogale (her first name meant "Queenie"). She was the mother of

159 two children, both beyond the infant stage. She lived in one of
754 the typical town structures of wooden posts, hard-mud walls, dirt floor, and corrugated iron roof.

During the night when she was first "struck", she screamed that she was being eaten by a buda. She howled like a hyena and wanted to run outside. Her husband and neighbors tied her up and feared that she was going to die. She threw herself on the ground and seemed in great inner pain. Her husband ran to the Addis Alam section, in the middle of the night, despite curfew and dangers, to fetch the woggesha doctor, to obtain strong smelling herbs. The woggesha came as soon as dawn arrived, for he had had some experience with buda cases. The woman patient spoke with a convincing male voice. Finally she revealed the name of the sorcerer who had placed the spell on her. She accused an Arab merchant, one of several who operated permanent stalls at the daily market. She exclaimed: "I am Abdulla Abdul Hijazi". She (correctly) identified his residence as the 3rd shop from the left corner". She boasted, still in male voice: "I am drinking her blood with my golden teeth".

As it turned out, there was indeed an Arab merchant by that name at that location, who had his two incisors capped with gold crowns, a rarity so far inland where no dentist offices existed, but common enough on the coast among Arabs of means.

The day before the attack, the woman had been shopping for sandals at this Arab's shop and several others, but had made no purchase since the prices were too high for her.

Once the patient had revealed the identity of the sorcerer, she was untied. Early in the morning the husband and his brother set out to look for the accused Arab, located his place, but could

- 159 not find him. They vowed to waylay him some night and beat him
754 bloody, but bystanders felt that they would cool their tempers
and perhaps try to get the merchant into trouble with the local
police by planting stolen goods on him - a common procedure, in
the towns.

Later the same day, the Arab merchant was conducting business
as usual. The rumor did not seem to have hurt him, but local grape-
vine had it that husbands would restrain their wives from shopping
there, though they would risk sending servants. Abdulla had nothing
devilish about him, except the distinguishing mark of the capped
incisors. He was medium-sized, slender, calm, without any stare
that might have frightened the woman. His goods were the usual
town goods, ranging from imported eyeglasses to notebooks for
school children, and cheap beads.

[124] By this time the woman patient was seated on the dirt floor
of her house, looking tired, worn out and dejected. She had no
longer a headache, of which she had complained, but claimed to have
"heartache" and swelling of the left breast. A neighboring woman
was brewing coffee. Her husband's brother, who was also present,
asked my advice. I gave him some aspirin for her. She forgot her
apathy for a moment and gratefully and politely nodded. Later she
refused to take that strange medicine of the foreigner.

d. Ethnic Caste under Suspicion of Sorcery

754
563 The Falasha ethno-religious group has been described
in connection with the division of labor, for they are the ironsmiths
and potters in the Amhara regions, especially in the province of
Begemdir (Gondar).

ETHIOPIAN FOLKTALES ASCRIBED TO THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY AMHARA WIT,

191 ALĀQA GĀBRE-HANNA:—Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia today, is gradually be-
 212 coming the *lingua franca* of the empire. Until recently it was spoken mainly on the fertile
 538 highland plateau of central and northwestern Ethiopia, in part of what was formerly known
 as Abyssinia. Predominantly Coptic Christian, the Amhara people have sacred writings in
 Ge'ez, old Ethiopic. Amharic has adapted this ancient script to its own use. The folklore of
 the Amhara is mainly oral (except for religious texts) and represents a crosscurrent of Mid-
 [565] dle Eastern and African cultures. Traditionally, Amhara society was one of priests, feudal
 lords, and peasants. Lower on the social scale were non-Coptic ethnic groups who per-
 formed such important economic functions as ironsmithing and pottery-making.

538 This is reflected in the folklore. On non-religious, everyday subjects, the wit of the Am-
 522 hara is peasant-like, earthy, full of tales of Rabelaisian appetites and sly solutions to human
 193 problems. The Amharic language lends itself readily to puns and hidden meanings, since
 many verbs can have double or triple interpretations due to the hidden variations in the
 basic verbal stem and the absence or presence of gemination of some consonants. The lis-
 tener must pay close attention. If he misinterprets the context and fails to discern the pun,
 he is often made the butt of the next tricky joke by those who have heard it before. The
 more a storyteller and wit masters the *sowaso* 'grammar' of the Amharic language, the
 better he can manipulate this humor.

538 A master of this art was *Alāqa* 'Chief' (an honorary title) Gābre-Hanna, a contem-
 159 porary of Emperor Menelik just before the end of the nineteenth century. As far as is
 known, he never put into writing any of his stories, witticisms, linguistic gymnastics, and
 philosophical puns. But to this day the peasants and even the nobles remember his stories
 well and tell them so often that a number of versions have developed.

He was a native of Gondar and had all the provincial pride of the "Gondarey" in the
 one-time greatness of this town and district that is now back country. He lived at the time
 the present capital, Addis Ababa, was being built and the King of Shoa had become Em-
 peror of Abyssinia. Like many another "Gondarey," *Alāqa* Gābre-Hanna pretended to dis-
 disdain the newfangled importations of Emperor Menelik and the growing employment of
 subjugated Galla tribal chiefs at the imperial court. Jokingly, he took the liberty of refer-
 ring to the Emperor's home province, Shoa, as "that Galla province." (Even today much
 [191] Galla is spoken there, a result of the sixteenth century conquest of the area by Galla
 tribes.) No one else would have dared such a remark, but he was popular with Emperor
 Menelik and especially with the Empress Taitu, and could tell them certain frank truths
 and tease them with irony in a semi-polite manner. However, he was not a court jester.

538 When miffed, or in temporary disgrace, he would request permission to return to his native Gondar. Subsequently he would send excuse after excuse to the capital for refusing to go back there, until he felt that he had been sufficiently coaxed to assuage his pride as a scholar and that further hesitation might result in serious difficulties, even for him. Empress Taitu was a very powerful figure and often protected him when he had gone too far with Emperor Menelik (her fifth husband).

[114] Although the following stories have no titles except "Story of Aläqa Gäbre-Hanna," I have given them names to point up the major emphasis. This material was gathered orally from Amharic-speaking peasants and nobles in the Gondar region (during my field trip to that area in 1953-54 on a grant from the Ford Foundation).

539 *The Wit And The Nitwit.* AG-H didn't like the rumor going around that he had become a snob, that he didn't greet common people politely any more. One day, accompanied by his usual retinue of friends and admirers, he was greeted effusively with deep bows by a certain donkey-driver who was known as none too bright. In return, to quash the nasty rumors, AG-H bowed just as deeply, from the hips, instead of the usual nod from one of his station in life. But, unable to resist the temptation for a witticism, he greeted the donkey-driver with the words "Endä: ad-derachuk? How are ye?"

[576] Unaware that the second person plural had been used, the proud donkey-driver was soon boasting at the nearest barley-beer hut of the honor he had received. His cronies made him repeat the exact remark, suspecting some twist. They quickly convinced the poor fool that the greeting had included him in the same class with his donkeys, and the simpleton slunk away in shame.

Another version of the story: But the donkey-driver was, after all, a proud Amhara. Realizing that he had been made a fool of, he took his walking stick, went to the house of AG-H, and beat him unmercifully. This was one time that his wit struck back at him.

Good Eating Comes First. Though greatly honored at the court of Emperor Menelik in newly-built Addis Ababa, AG-H was once again homesick for his native Gondar. Finally, he was granted permission for a leave home.

He promptly organized his small caravan and was about to mount his mule when he noticed two fat cows being taken to slaughter. Thinking of the long trip ahead without fresh beef, he decided to wait around and obtain a good share of the meat which was being rapidly parcelled out. The meat had to be washed down with a huge jugful of barley-beer and honey-mead, and so the day passed with pleasant feasting. It was late afternoon when it happened that Emperor Menelik came riding by. Surprised to see the homesick scholar still in the capital, the Emperor addressed him: "I gave you permission to go, and you are still here?"

But, as usual, his wit did not fail AG-H. "Lam gab 'the cows were entering,' your Majesty," he replied. (The phrase is used to indicate dusk, when the cows come home, too late to start on a trip. The cows had indeed "entered," i.e., into the stomach of AG-H; and no one could accuse him later of having told a lie to the Emperor.)

Pride Of A Man From Gondar Province. The next time AG-H became homesick occurred in the middle of the long Lenten fast. The housewives of Gondar were famous for their many spicy recipes for cooking fish in that season, and when AG-H thought of these his mouth watered and nothing pleased him any more in Shoa province.

One day he was invited to dine at the house of a noble of Shoa. The odor of fish being cooked attracted him to the cooking hut. It seemed to him that the woman cook had not properly cleaned the fish and had added too much water. He began to moan and groan.

"What's the matter?" asked his host.

Pointing to the watery fish stew, AG-H replied: "The fish are better off than I. They are in their native state, but I am so far from mine!"

Safety From Robbers. Once again the long rainy season was over, the rivers had receded, and the trails were passable again. AG-H managed to obtain a generous purse of Maria-Theresa thalers from the Empress and was on his perennial way back to Gondar.

He was just emerging from the lowland valley of the Abbai (Blue Nile) to climb up the escarpment of the dangerous province of Gojjam, which he had to traverse. Suddenly one of his companions spotted a band of robbers waiting at the top of the upland trail.

[GONDAR]

27 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

kindles artistic expression, so the poet could wax eloquent over Gondar's decadence at the close of the eighteenth century:

Beautiful from its beginnings, Gondar, hope of the wretched!
And hope of the great, Gondar, without measure or bounds!
O dove of John, Gondar, generous-hearted, mother!
Gondar, never bowed by affliction!
Gondar, with its merry name!
Gondar, seat of prosperity and of savoury food!
Gondar, dwelling of King Iyāsu and of mighty Bakāffā!
Gondar, which emulated the city of David, the land of Salem!
She will be a myth unto eternity.

How is it she has been destroyed like Sodom, and without any guilt?*

So, while the reputation of the Gondar monarchy grew dim, that of the town as a center for religious studies continued unabated. Gondar was the most famous place in the country for instruction in art, music, dance, poetry, and the great books of the Ethiopian Church, and young men continued to travel great distances to drink at such sources. The descendants of royalty somehow made their adjustment. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Arnauld d'Abbadie finds them making paintings and illuminating manuscripts.

At this late date, one more personality of stature emerges from Gondar. This time it is not a king but a *dabtarā*, or man of religious learning—Alaqā Gabra Hännā. Gabra Hännā was born in the district of Foggarā on the east coast of Lake Tānā. His pursuit of religious studies as a youth took him to Gondar, where he did well and before long became a teacher in the church of Ba'ātā Māryām. Subsequently he was made head of the church, receiving the customary title of *alaqā*.

While at Ba'ātā, Alaqā Gabra Hännā invented a new style of dance for the clergy. In the traditional style of *aquāquām*, the bodies and sticks of the dancers move up and down, punctuating the flow of chant with alternately gradual and abrupt vertical movements. Alaqā Gabra Hännā, inspired by the lateral movement of the waves at Lake Tānā and of the bamboo reeds in the breeze at its shore, taught that bodies and sticks should sway from side to side. This innovation was rejected by the conservative clergy at Gondar, but it was carried by his son Taklē to Dabra Tābor and from there spread elsewhere.

Alaqā Gabra Hännā became most famous, however, for his quick and biting wit. So prolific and beloved were his witticisms that in a collection of some three hundred old parables and anecdotes published in Addis Ababa in 1955, no fewer than 25 per cent are devoted to stories about him.¹⁰ After reaching prominence through his teachings and sayings, Alaqā Gabra Hännā

175*
633
517
538
[539]

175*
633
517
53

175*
159
993
633

[535]
[178]

[214]
[538]

*175 left Gondar for Shoa, where he became a favorite at the court of Emperor
633 Menelik.

• [159] Alaqa Gabra Hännā was not the only one to leave Gondar in the latter
[793] part of the nineteenth century. Conditions there had become increasingly
*175 miserable. In 1866 Tēwodros, angered by the opposition of the Gondarē
633 clergy to his plans for unifying the country through a standing national army,
643 turned his wrath against them into a fearful pillage of the churches of Gondar.
[648] The next emperor, Takla Giyorgis, worked feverishly to rebuild Gondar during his few years in power (1869-72). It was to no avail. In 1887 a large army of dervishes invaded Ethiopia from the Sudan and sacked Gondar, destroying it more completely than had Tēwodros.

*175 The priests and monks who survived carried on. Gondar remained an important
633 center for instruction in *aquāquām* and *tergum*, though Gojjam became more important for the study of *qenē* and other schools in Bagemder and Tigre for the study of *zēmā*. The civil order, however, was thoroughly demoralized. Gondarēs left in large numbers for the countryside or made
[666] their way to Lāstā and more distant provinces.

*175 At the time of the dervish invasion, the churchmen of Gondar appealed to
633 Emperor Yohānnes for succor. The text of their message—the last utterance
643 from the old capital—began as follows:

648 O master! The heathen have come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Gondar in heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Dambiyā; and there was none to bury them.¹¹

Yohānnes responded at once. It was to revenge defenseless Gondar that he led the expedition against the dervishes which cost him his life, thereby leaving the way open for the accession of the House of Manz.

The Role of Manz

131 Manz is a rugged rural area of about 850 square miles located in the north-
133 east horn of Shoa Province.¹² It lies on a broad plateau at a height of ten thousand feet above sea level. This plateau is crosscut by a number of rivers which flow westerly to become part of the great Blue Nile Basin. The valleys of the rivers are flanked by fairly abrupt cliffs, which make travel from one part of Manz to another slow going. These rivers form boundaries between the geographical divisions within Manz, which is divided into three major parts: Māmā Meder in the south, Lālo Meder in the center, and Gērā Meder in the north. The entire area of Manz is itself bounded by steep mountains.¹³

* Fortunately he preserved hundreds of manuscripts from Gondar's churches which eventually found their way to the British Museum after the Napier Expedition against Tēwodros in 1868.

53 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

liefs and values, (2) retention of the basic emotional tie and identification with the group in question, and (3) elaboration of the virtues of the group in terms of universalistic criteria. 121

This is a type of orientation to the primordial sentiments which has the effect of maximizing both traditional and modern values, for it retains the sources of security and identity provided by tradition yet defines them in ways that promote national solidarity and the creative resources of the national culture. It is an approach which may be illustrated, in concluding this chapter, by the cases of two modern-educated Amhara who identify themselves, in part, as a Manzē and a Gondarē.

"Balāṭchaw" is an American-educated official of the Ethiopian government. Born and raised in Addis Ababa, his family originated in Manz, and he still has relatives who reside there. He is an ardent modernizer, anxious to see progressive leadership and the expansion of educational facilities provided in the provinces; yet he is also very sentimental about Amhara traditions and, in particular, his *agar* Manz. 159 829 (823)

To Balāṭchaw, Manz symbolizes hard-core loyalty to blood and to land. It also symbolizes the will to fight stubbornly for one's rights and for what one thinks right. He sees the government's keen concern for its territorial boundaries as a direct reflection of the Manzē's determination to retain and acquire land. Balāṭchaw gets much pleasure out of telling stories about the Manzē's almost foolhardy bravery in combatting the Italian invader. He reveals a "clear consciousness of an inner identity" with the Manzē in this regard, and says of himself: "You know, even as a child, and ever since, I have not been afraid of anybody."

"Makonnen" is a government official who was trained in western Europe. His family lives in Gondar, though he spent little time there after leaving for secondary school in Addis Ababa. In the course of his studies abroad, he had become estranged from the traditional ties and symbols of his Gondar-Amhara background. And yet now he speaks with great respect of the virtues of Gondarē, their cultivated manner in personal relations, and their pride and wit in the use of language. The meaning of Gondar came to him almost in the manner of a revelation:

In the midst of my studies in Western Europe I had the chance one summer to visit a number of West African countries and then to return home and spend some time in Gondar. I had not thought very highly of my people before that trip, and what I experienced was a great surprise. What I found—what we have, that I did not find in the African countries I visited—is a special sort of dignity of manner. When I talked with the elders at Gondar I was moved to tears. That is something priceless; that is a great and irreplaceable national resource.

206 / WAX & GOLD

121 authorities. Except for a very few eccentric individuals who have seemed
571 oblivious to the dangers of speaking out their criticism of the status quo in
177 public, this has in the nature of current circumstances necessarily involved
178 clandestine activity. Returnees have been involved in small conspiratorial
156 groups since the mid-fifties. The December, 1960, coup d'état has been the
[669] most ambitious rebellious project to be acted out so far. Similarly motivated
[668] activities have included the duplication and distribution of subversive litera-
ture, and the formation of small groups as groundwork for an eventual polit-
ical party.

Our data do not permit reliable estimates of the frequency of these differ-
ent modes of adaptation among the returnees. It is important to note, how-
ever, that individuals often change from one mode to another in the course of
their experience after return and that many follow more than one pattern at
the same time. It is unlikely that the total number of returnees oriented pri-
marily as rebels has ever exceeded two per cent. Most of them move in and
out of phases of Reformism, Withdrawal, and Opportunism, depending to a
large extent on the accidents of their appointments. A more concrete picture
of their experience may be suggested by the following case study, that of a
Western-educated Ethiopian who went from a phase of Withdrawal to one of
Reformism tinged with Opportunism.

The Adjustment of "Haile": Case Study of a Returnee

121
571
159
156

October, 1958. Haile has recently returned from four years of study in a
Western country. He speaks very critically about the state of
things in Ethiopia. He is particularly upset by the prevailing
inefficiency, the lack of industriousness, and the intermi-
nable procrastination (*ishi naga*).

January, 1959. Haile seems deeply depressed. The ministry in which he has
been placed affords him no opportunity to work effectively
and the job he has bears no relation to what he was trained
for. He has withdrawn more into himself, but to all outward
appearances plays perfectly well, with great self-assurance,
the role of the Amhara bureaucrat.

July, 1959. Now Haile is working in a different ministry, in a job some-
what more closely related to his training. He appears to feel
productive and useful now, and his criticism is constructive.
For example, he frequently compares the situation in the
United States and Ethiopia, to show how the same sort of
problem can be solved more readily in the U.S. because of its
greater facilities. Though Ethiopia's comparative handicaps
frustrate him, he talks of plans for the development of
Ethiopia with some enthusiasm. . . . Haile complains of an

207 / *The Old and New Elites*

overload of work, noting that he must not only do his own work but also rectify the mistakes made by others which are brought to him. In his whole branch of the ministry, he finds only two really effective workers besides himself, and they, too, are returnees. . . . He feels fortunate in having encountered no major opposition to the things he is doing in his work and points happily to the fact that his assistant minister has supported him throughout.

October, 1959.

Haile now is saying that things are fine in Addis Ababa and stresses the great improvement that has been made during the past five years. He claims that he is getting along fine in his ministry, because his job is straight "busy work." Even so, he is not a pure "ritualist"; he has already negotiated a number of reforms in the operations of his office. His general outlook seems bright—partly, no doubt, because he is "arriving" (what with printed name-cards and a smoothly functioning job) but also because he has a pretty fiancée whom he plans to marry next year. . . . At another point, however, he shows great exasperation over the considerable conflict among factions within the ministry. He decries the nepotism practiced by the heads of these factions. He says that he tries to stay independent of their intrigues.

June, 1960.

Recently Haile was given additional responsibilities in his ministry, and he expects a raise in salary soon. Although this new work is still further removed from the subjects he studied while abroad than was his previous job, he no longer complains about not being hired to do what he had been trained for or about not being used. He remains unhappy about his minister, who brings in his own men from the outside rather than promote men from the ranks—"or else I would have been a director general by now." On the other hand, he mentions with evident pleasure the fact that the Emperor sent over a gift at the time of his wedding. . . . Haile's wife is a simple, traditional sort of Ethiopian girl. He seems happy with her and with their home—an old, poorly built structure that is falling apart, but which she has taken pains to enliven with a few decorations, and has equipped with a radio. He looks forward to the prospect of building a house on their own land sometime in the future. Meanwhile, a baby is on the way. . . . The circle has come full swing. Haile talks proudly about his work, his family, and his country.